



William and Celia Pomeroy

Political and Military Struggle

Presuming that we have by now established that we are not pacifists, but are revolutionaries who intend, by all means necessary, to assist the working class to expropriate the expropriator bourgeois class; then why can we not move with speed, and without any restraint, towards an armed overthrow of the oppressors?

Why are we bothering with democracy? Are we not being “stageist”????

The late William “Bill” Pomeroy started his essay “On the Time for Armed Struggle” (linked below) from exactly this point of departure, as follows:

“Because of the decisive results that can follow from an armed smashing of the main instruments of power held by a ruling class or a foreign oppressor, some of those who acquire a revolutionary outlook are eager to move to the stage of armed struggle; and their concept of it as the highest form of revolutionary struggle causes them to cast discredit upon other forms as 'less advanced', as amounting to collaboration with or capitulation to the class enemy.”

But:

“Too often the aura of glory associated with taking up arms has obscured hard prosaic truths and realities in the interplay of forces in a period of sharp struggle.”

And later:

“The experiences of the revolutionary movement in the Philippines offer an interesting example of the complex, varied and fluctuating processes that may occur in a liberation struggle.”

Pomeroy writes that *“analysis and understanding of the revolutionary experiences of others is indispensable”*. He proceeds to offer some of his own rich and extraordinary experience as a military combatant and revolutionary, including the disastrous experience of the Philippines, when the military began to act independently of political control.

Pomeroy’s main lesson is that the military must never think that it can cease to be subordinate to the political power. The political organisation must always rule over the military.

His writing and his advice helped the ANC in the exile years, when Pomeroy was exiled in London. It is important that younger comrades read these things and understand some of the problems that had to be negotiated.

William Pomeroy passed away on 12 January 2009 and Celia Pomeroy passed away on 22 August 2009.

- The above is to introduce the original reading-text: [On the Time for Armed Struggle, 1974, Pomeroy](#).
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